

Diversity Dialogue Project (DDP) Program Evaluation

Executive Summary

February 21, 2014

Shavondalyn Givens – DDP Program Manager

Mark Steiner – DDP Program Evaluation Deputy Program Manager & DDP Facilitator

Dan Krieger – D&I Program Manager

OHCM Evaluation Team – Jose Maldonado, Ben Slade and Matt Stone

The Diversity Dialogue Project (DDP) was established to help provide GSFC a context to talk about sensitive diversity topics. In doing so, DDP hopes to create a Center culture that is aware of diversity and inclusion in the workplace. To evaluate the DDP, the Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) office partnered with the Office of Human Capital Management (OHCM). The data collection methodology included a series of interviews, focus groups, and surveys. The data collected was then organized and analyzed to determine DDP's effectiveness and utilization of resources. High-level recommendations were developed from the findings. From the data, D&I and OHCM were able to conclude that DDP is a highly valued program with the ability to impact participants' perceptions and biases. 95% of the qualitative responses from the survey describe how DDP has helped them become more open-minded, use inclusive words, and value different perspectives. However, improvements can be made with DDP Facilitator support, the selection process, and Center awareness of the program.

Summary of information gathered

1) Impact on Participants and their behavior in the workplace

- a) Three questions were asked to gauge how the DDP experience allowed participants to become more aware of how certain Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) aspects influence them (Survey Q1):
 - How diversity and inclusion influences interpersonal interactions in the workplace:
 - o 80.5% Agreed or Strongly Agreed
 - How diversity and inclusion influences team performance in the workplace:
 - o 75.4% Agreed or Strongly Agreed
 - How each individual's background can influence thoughts, behaviors and actions:
 - o 84.8 % Agreed or Strongly Agreed

Key conclusion: These results strongly indicate that DDP is very successful in raising awareness in the participants, a key component in creating a Center culture where D&I is a basic underpinning.

- b) Questions were asked regarding how participants' thoughts, viewpoints, and actions changed as a result of DDP (Survey Q2 and Q15):
- I gained a better understanding of how and why others may arrive at conclusions different from my own:
 - o 81.2% Agreed or Strongly Agreed
 - I gained a better understanding of how members of different minority groups face different challenges in the workplace:
 - o 81.7% Agreed or Strongly Agreed
 - I have built stronger relationships with my co-workers:
 - o 57.8% Agreed or Strongly Agreed
 - I believe that having conversations with a diverse group shifted my perspectives on diversity and inclusion:
 - o 70.1% Agreed or Strongly Agreed

Key conclusion: These results strongly indicate that DDP is very successful in encouraging behaviors in the workplace that improve the Center's ability to take advantage of its very diverse workforce and reduce the inefficiencies that come from less cohesive workgroups.

- c) Participants were asked if they believed that DDP adds value to achieving Goddard's mission, and 79.4% either Agreed or Strongly Agreed.

Key conclusion: These results strongly indicate that people who have participated in DDP believe that the Project improves the Center's ability to take advantage of its very diverse workforce and increases Goddard's ability to deliver all its products and services.

2) Effectiveness of DDP Facilitators and creating safe dialog environments

The Center has chosen to rely on DDP facilitators from inside its own ranks, training and certifying them to facilitate the DDP sessions. A key component of their success is the participants' feelings that a safe environment has been created and maintained where they can have effective dialog on sensitive subjects. This includes the ability to maintain a respectful environment, encouraging active participation from all those present, and ensuring confidentiality and privacy. All data collection methods (interviews and survey Q3) agreed that the DDP facilitators created a safe environment to discuss sensitive topics.

Key conclusion: These results strongly indicate that the present use of internal DDP facilitators is an effective way to run the DDP program, and that the facilitators are a key component of its wide success.

3) Support of participants' direct supervisors

Of the responding participants, 91.1% Agreed or Strongly Agreed that their direct supervisors supported their participation in DDP. 78.9% Agreed or Strongly Agreed that their direct supervisors supported D&I initiatives.

Key conclusion: These results strongly indicate that the Center's supervisors strongly support DDP and D&I initiatives, that this support is visible in the workforce, and that their support has a direct effect

on participants' abilities to enhance their awareness of D&I and benefit from that increased awareness of D&I as part of Goddard's culture.

4) Support of GSFC Senior Leaders

Of the responding participants, 82.3% Agreed or Strongly Agreed that GSFC Senior Leaders support D&I initiatives. 74.0% Agreed or Strongly Agreed that GSFC Senior Leaders emphasize the importance of the DDP.

Key conclusion: These results strongly indicate that GSFC Senior Leaders strongly support DDP and D&I initiatives, that this support is visible in the workforce, and that this is important in the development of an enhanced awareness of D&I and its benefits in maintaining and increasing Goddard's ability to deliver all its products and services.

The full results of the surveys, focus groups and interviews (including free-form responses) are available from the DDP Program Manager for further in-depth review.

Next steps

- 1) Plans to improve and update DDP based on information gathered:
 - a) DDP facilitators and D&I stakeholders constantly work to ensure that the phases and their component sessions are scheduled in the most effective manner possible (length of sessions and frequency); include the proper mix of program topics while still being open to hot topics that may be of high concern for the participants; and the groups reflect the diverse workforce. The evaluation indicates that this will continue to be a worthwhile endeavor.
 - b) DDP facilitators and D&I stakeholders are working on the feasibility of follow-up activities (61% of respondents from the survey indicated they would attend a follow-up activity). Possibilities include:
 - i) One-time reunions
 - ii) Advanced sessions for those who have attended previous DDP phases
 - iii) Special one-time or series of sessions open to all GSFC employees to address particular topics of interest. For example, an open house DDP discussion for anyone to attend. Supervisors could encourage their employees to attend who cannot get into DDP because of limited slots. Stakeholders mentioned difficulty getting employees into DDP due to limited slot allocation. One challenge to be addressed would be the capability to create the necessary safe environment quickly enough to make effective use of the time of those attending.
 - c) Increasing the understanding of DDP throughout the Goddard community: When participants were asked about this level of understanding, 19.8 % Disagreed, 47.8 % were Neutral, 28.0 % Agreed, and only 2.7 % Strongly Agreed that it was well understood across the Goddard community. This indicates a strong need to continue outreach and marketing efforts for DDP.
 - d) DDP facilitators and D&I stakeholders will be working to improve participants' awareness of and interest in taking action in supporting D&I at Goddard as a result of DDP (Survey Q14 and Q15). 70% of participants that created an action plan took action to transfer their learning to the workplace.

- 2) The following recommendations are based on suggestions from stakeholders, facilitators, and participants, as well as analysis conducted by the evaluators. DDP facilitators and D&I stakeholders will be evaluating actions that could be taken to implement them, pending resources available:
- a) Reduce the administrative burden of facilitators by reducing paperwork, making the recertification process easier, and having discussions about incompatibilities with the time required to perform DDP activities and what is in their official performance plans.
 - b) For slot allocation decisions regarding the diversity of the DDP groups, consider dealing with influential positions as well as the size of the organizations. Influential positions interact with many employees, allowing them to better spread the lessons of DDP throughout the Center. These positions could include, but are not limited to Principle Investigator, Project Manager, Advisory Committee chairs, etc.
 - c) For supervisor sessions, include an internal Subject Matter Experts for particular topics to help facilitate conversations. For example, when using a case study of an incident at NASA, someone with knowledge of the case study should be used.
 - d) Senior Leadership could also be considered to attend a session. Stakeholders and facilitators mentioned the presence of senior leadership at a session might help emphasize the importance of DDP across the Center. This will need to be balanced against the potential distractions that might be introduced.
 - e) Input metrics that can contribute to longitudinal study. Compare how employees were before and after DDP and how they progress years later. Develop a survey similar to the one used for this evaluation and distribute to participants a year after completion to measure transfer of learning.
 - f) Include a topic on Diversity of Thinking based on positions. Participants on several occasions highlighted how much they enjoyed hearing from different disciplines (i.e. Engineer, Scientist, Procurement, Human Resource, Professional Administration, etc.).
 - g) Develop a list of follow-up assignments in which participants can choose one activity to help them become a change agent for diversity (speak with supervisor, present to co-workers, participate in a D&I event, etc.).
 - h) Several Stakeholders mentioned having confusion with other D&I programs. There needs to be a better distinction from other programs and when programs calls are released in-terms of who should attend.